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Title: Letter from James Buchanan to Lily Macalester

Date: January 20, 1854

Location: MC 1998.10, B3, F15

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Legation of The United States.

London 20 January 1854

My dear Lily,

Although I well know that I
have not deserved your misivoe of the 9th ^{to a general} ~~at least~~,
^{as I did not receive it till within a week,}
yet let that pass. I would long 'ere this have
sent you the Daguerreotype, but have never seen one
in London which is not a fault. Now as I am
getting old & never was very good looking ~~at best~~, I
desire to make my best appearance in your eyes consist-
-ently with the truth. This I cannot do by a
Daguerreotype taken in London where they are very
far behind us in this as well as in many other respects.
When I was in New York previous to my departure
for this country Mr. Brady took a likeness of me which
he said was one of the three best he had ever taken.

I have adopted means, through a friend, to have a copy of this ~~letter~~ made for you & I have no doubt Brady will do his best; - so that you may expect this any day.

If I were at all subject to the Blue Devils which fortunately I am not, I should have had them in perfection since my arrival in London. The climate is said, although not good at best, to have been more disagreeable during this period than it had been at the same season within the memory of man. The Americans all escape to Paris as soon as possible & they represent that city as charming. Here there is no general gaiety, except in what they call the season; & this does not ^{fairly} commence until about the first of May & terminates with the adjournment of Parliament some time in

August. Except during this season it is not fashionable for the Nobility & gentry to be in London. They are all upon their estates in the Country which they consider their real home or are wandering over the Continent. Of course the high Officials must remain here. Every body tells me that this will be done & that will be done in the Season. I arrived made a merciful escape in not coming with me, as I arrived at the very end of the last season.

With all these anticipations, ^{the} of "the Season" I should be most happy to escape ^{from it} ~~the season~~ if I could do so by returning with honor to my own Country. I should be far happier in retirement at Wheathall than amidst the gaiety of London. But I must submit to my fate & make the best of my situation. Twenty years ago when in Russia I enjoyed a Court life, but my season has passed for such vanities.

The Ladies of this Country are generally of larger
 stature & more robust than the American Ladies,
 though they are deficient in the delicate beauty
 which is so common in our Country. I attribute
 their more vigorous health to the quantity of exercise
 which they take in all weathers in the open air.
 You never see them in full dress on the streets;
 but muffled up & with thick shoes they stride
 along with an air of much independence. I
 should be willing to join a Society in America
 to promote exercise in the open air by our Ladies.

This climate is healthy except for those
 who have a tendency to Consumption or bronchial
 disease. More than one fourth of all the deaths in
 London at this season of the year are from diseases of
 the throat & lungs.

Please to remember me, in the kindest terms
 to your grandmother, father, Aunt & brother & to
 James Henry should you see & believe me to be
 affectionately & respectfully
 your friend
 Miss Lily Macalester
 James Buchanan

Legation of the United States.
London 20 January 1854

My Dear Lily/

Although I well know that I have not deserved your missive of the 9th. ~~Instant~~, ultimo, wc. I did not receive until within a week, yet let that pass. I would long 'ere this have sent you the Daguerreotype; but have never seen one in London which is not a fright. Now as I am getting old I never was very good looking ~~at best~~, I desire to make my best appearance in your eyes consistently with the truth. This I cannot do by a Daguerreotype taken in London where they are very far behind us in this as well as in many other respects. When I was in New York previous to my departure for this Country Mr. Brady took a likeness of me which he said was one of the three best he had ever taken.

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I have adopted means, through a friend, to have a copy of this ~~taken~~ made for you & I have no doubt Brady will do his best;- so that you may expect this any day.

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August. Except during this season it is not fashionable for the nobility & gentry to be in London. They are all upon their estates in the country which they consider their real home or are wandering over the Continent. Of course the high officials must remain here. Every body tells me that this will be done & that will be done in the Season. Harriet made a merciful escape in not coming with me, as I arrived at the very end of the last season.

With all ~~these~~ the anticipations of "the Season", I should be most happy to escape ~~the season~~ from it if I could do so by returning with honor to my own Country. I should be far happier in retirement at Wheatland than amidst the gaiety of London. But I must submit to my fate & make the best of my situation. Twenty years ago when in Russia I enjoyed a Court life, but my season has passed for such vanities.

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This climate is healthy except for there who have a tendency to consumptive or bronchial disease. More than one fourth of all the deaths in London at this season of the year are from diseases of the throat & lungs.

Please to remember me, in the kindest terms to your grandmother, father, aunt & brother & to James Henry should you see & believe me to be

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